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## *Artists of the Year*





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## THE SHORTLIST



60 amazing  
photos from  
City Pages  
photographers  
in 2019  
citypages.com

LESLIE PLESSER

## THE STAT SHEET

60

Minnesota schools experiencing  
a widespread flu outbreak

\$4.5  
million

Settlement in 2015 discrimination  
suit between UMD and former  
women's hockey coach

3.3%

MN's unemployment rate in  
November, slightly better than  
the national rate of 3.5%

\$1,500

Donations—six as of last week—  
dropped in Salvation Army kettles  
by anonymous "St. Grand"

"#1 Yangtze.  
#2 Szechuan Spice."

Reader Aaron Gleeman responds to  
"Celebrate Hanukkah with the Twin Cities'  
best Jewish food" at citypages.com.

## ROCKIN' THE SUBURBS

**WILL THE SUBURBAN VOTERS** who helped Democrats take Minnesota in 2016 do it again in 2020? MinnPost reports that in a recent University of Minnesota poll, 51 percent of suburban Minnesotans (who also said they're likely to vote) said they're likely to vote Democrat next November. Just 33 percent said they'll go for Donald Trump. That's crucial, since the state's rural population will almost certainly be red, and the cities are very, very blue. "It remains the one, mainly competitive area," Tim Lindberg, associate professor of American government at the U's Morris campus, told the paper.

## POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

### 25 MOST-READ

City Pages stories of 2019

Three Minneapolis

**BOYS WENT MISSING** in 1951.  
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Downtown Walgreens sells  
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West St. Paul Craigslist  
missed connection:  
'I **ALMOST HIT YOU** with my van'

Minnesota 'Democrat'  
**COLLIN PETERSON** (sigh) votes  
against impeachment



# DEADLY FORCE

Report: 9 cops shot at man killed in north Minneapolis

Anyone wondering how Minneapolis police left so many bullet holes at the scene of their fatal encounter with Chiasher Vue got their answer last Wednesday.

One sergeant and eight officers of the Minneapolis Police Department fired their weapons at Vue, according to a release from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), which also gave an initial narrative of what happened early on the morning of Sunday, December 16. All nine cops are on paid leave as the BCA continues its investigation.

According to the BCA's release, a 911 caller said Vue, 52, had been "carrying a knife and shooting a gun" in a home on the 3100 block of Thomas Avenue in north Minneapolis. Vue's wife, Mai Pha Vue, told Minnesota Public Radio she believed her husband had a gun, but said he hadn't shot it before police arrived. Mai Pha Vue

also said she thought her husband had surrendered and posed no threat at the time he was shot.

"Several" people who'd been there fled the house before cops arrived, though one was still inside when authorities first contacted Vue by phone and spoke to him through an interpreter.

Vue appeared at the door; the BCA report says, then went back inside the house and emerged with a gun. A source told the Star Tribune Vue had an "older Soviet-style rifle," and that the cops stood around 100 feet away from the home.

Vue pointed the weapon and "began firing," according to the BCA, and the police returned fire, hitting Vue and riddling the side of the house with bullets. "Portions" of the incident were captured on officers' body cameras, and a rifle found where Vue had stood was taken into evidence.

The family member still inside at the time of the shootout was "not injured during



Several people fled the north Minneapolis house before an encounter that left it riddled with bullets, though one was still inside at the time.

GOOGLE MAPS

the incident," the report says, but sought treatment at North Memorial Medical Hospital for "an unrelated condition."

Vue was treated at the scene and also taken to North Memorial, where he was declared dead of "multiple gunshot wounds." No police officers were injured.

Vue is the second person killed by Minneapolis police this year, following the August death of Mario Benjamin, also in north Minneapolis, and also stemming

from a domestic dispute. Out of 10 fatal police shootings in Minneapolis since 2008, six happened in north Minneapolis.

Among the nine cops who pulled the trigger, four had been with the police department more than 10 years, and none has been on the beat fewer than five. Once the BCA's investigation is complete, its findings will be submitted to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for determination of any criminal charges. —MIKE MULLEN

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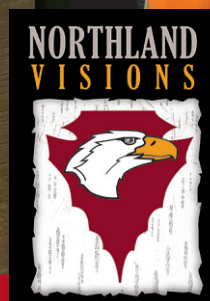


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# ARTISTS *of the* YEAR



Xochi de la Luna

## MEET THE MURALISTS, DANCERS, SCREENWRITERS, AND COMICS WHO STOOD OUT IN 2019

### XOCHI DE LA LUNA

**X**ochi de la Luna is a self-described weirdo.

“That’s what I’ve always been,” says de la Luna. “What I do is put on events where other weirdos thrive.”

One of the busiest artists in town, on any given night de la Luna may be a standup comedian, musician, event producer, emcee, or performance artist. They enjoy the challenge and reward of combining arts.

“I like to bring people together,” de la Luna says. “We have such a rich arts scene locally, but it can still feel very segregated. Dancers stick with dancers, comedians stick with comedians.”

Xochi is co-founder and producer of Vector 9, a monthly variety show that features black, brown, indigenous, and LGBTQ performers. Last summer, it celebrated its two-year anniversary. They also co-produce the (nearly) weekly standup showcase Uproar at Du Nord Craft Spirits.

“Uproar is probably the thing that I’m

most proud of from 2019; seeing it grow from a very local showcase into something that has become much larger,” says de la Luna. “We have acts from Los Angeles, Kentucky—all over the place.”

As a performer, de la Luna is likely best known as host of the monthly cabaret Mother Goose’s Bedtime Stories, which also celebrated its two-year anniversary this summer.

As a comic, de la Luna stayed busy this year with Uproar as well as performing at other shows around town, including Maggie Faris’ annual Pride Comedy

Blowout at Sisyphus.

“Comedy has been its own therapy for me,” they explain.

Regardless of the medium, de la Luna doesn’t feel the need to edge out other artists for stage time. Instead, they choose to create more opportunities to showcase talented folks.

“There is this scarcity mentality sometimes locally,” they explain. “I’m trying to show people that it’s not a competition, and that we all have our own beautiful thing to show.”

—PATRICK STRAIT





Ashwini Ramaswamy



Theater Gates exhibit at the Walker

## ASHWINI RAMASWAMY

How does an artist emerge from an intergenerational, accolade-rich family business with her own identity? If you're Ashwini Ramaswamy, you follow in your family's footsteps. You also veer brilliantly in new choreographic directions with *Let the Crows Come*, a work of enchanting beauty, arresting movement, and inventive intelligence.

"*Crows* was the first step in a new direction for me, which is making new work for non-Indian dancers using the principles of Bharatanatyam," she says.

The project began four years ago. "I had a fleeting idea: I saw a connection between a DJ remixing a song without losing its essence and being an immigrant born here with multiple cultural backgrounds." She sought out Liquid Music founder Kate Nordstrum for advice. Soon after, Nordstrum commissioned the piece.

Residencies followed, and so did grants and fellowships. Meanwhile, Ramaswamy worked with Jace Clayton (aka DJ/rupture), Brent Arnold (cello), and Prema Ramamurthy (classical Carnatic) on a score for *Crows* using ancient musical structures as departure points for electronic explorations.

Ramaswamy based her solo on Tamil Sangam poetry, Sanskrit texts, and Hindu rituals. She asked Alanna Morris-Van Tassel to give deep, full-body expression to her illustrative gestures. She asked Berit Ahlgren to manifest her Bharatanatyam movement in slow-motion reverse. Individually, their contributions are captivating. Together, the three illuminated the dance form's future. And with that, Ashwini Ramaswamy arrived.

Next, Ramaswamy will tour *Let the Crows Come*. She'll also be assisting her mother and sister with Ragamala's next large-scale project, *Fires of Varanasi*.

—CAMILLE LEFEVRE

## THEASTER GATES

For years, Theaster Gates has been collecting abandoned objects large and small: buildings on Chicago's South Side; books, magazines, and furniture from the Johnson Publishing Company; "Negrobilia" from the Edward J. Williams Collection. "Assembly Hall" brought selections from these collections into three immersive environments at the Walker Art Center.

The rooms rang out with Gates' passion for the histories of African-American material culture, resurrecting undervalued or underappreciated things with unflinching honesty, and a revelatory juxtaposition of the reprehensible with the remarkable. "It's the first time many of these collections have left the South Side of Chicago," says curator Victoria Sung. "The exhibition is a deep dive into Theaster's heart and brain."

Gates is also a maker. The Walker acquired one of his paintings in 2010. In 2017, the museum commissioned Gates' *Black Vessel for a Saint*, a salvaged statue of St. Laurence, the patron saint of librarians and archivists, for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.

"One of Theaster's primary roles as an artist is to care for objects that already exist, reconfiguring them in the world with poetic interventions and remembered cultural histories," says Sung. Gates reinvests the abandoned with meaning. In our consumer



Julie Buffalohead

culture of obsolescence and forgetfulness, Gates' practice is indeed profound.

—CAMILLE LEFEVRE

## JULIE BUFFALOHEAD

A St. Paul-based artist and member of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, Julie Buffalohead populates her work with mischievous raccoons, upside-down crows, and coyotes. For "Storytelling," Buffalohead's current solo exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, she explores themes of displacement, white saviors, cultural appropriation, and violence.

In 2019, Buffalohead was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, had a solo show at the Denver Art Museum, and was part of a number of group exhibitions, including the blockbuster "Hearts of Our People:

Native Women Artists" at Mia.

"I really like the fact that Native women are being honored," she says. "We sort of live in the shadows in a way. It's nice to be recognized in that respect."

Buffalohead's mixed-media work in the show, *The Garden*, is an indictment of the Walker Art Center's *Scaffold* debacle at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, and exemplifies Buffalohead's knack for serving pointed criticism with humor.

Interestingly, the Walker owns the work, and lent it to Mia for the exhibition. "I think why people are drawn to that piece is that I'm making a commentary about something that happened not only in the Native world but in the art world," Buffalohead says. "That isn't always done. You don't always criticize the institutions that are supporting you."

—SHEILA REGAN



Ashley Mary



Pedro Pablo Lander



## ASHLEY MARY

Ashley Mary's work has taken her to the beaches of Tulum, Mexico, the busy city streets of Scottsdale, Arizona, and the woods of Wisconsin. A painter and muralist, she has also collaborated with a swimwear line (Summer Salt) and a local jewelry designer (Larissa Loden), among others. "Primarily what I do is murals, paintings, and product design," she says. In her own words, her pieces are "abstract, colorful, textured, and playful." Recently, she was tapped to paint an Evereve storefront, and was commissioned to make a piece for Google's Los Angeles office. "That was a total 'pinch me' moment, getting to paint in the Google offices for two days by myself," she says.

The Tulum trips, where she created colorful pieces both inside and out for a resort, were a highlight of 2019. "It was fantastic to see my mural in the middle of the jungle on a building," she says.

What has surprised her the most about her career thus far? "Every single damn thing," she admits. "I never intended to own my own business, and I never intended to do art full-time."

Murals, however, are her passion, and she's excited about what's next. "I want to do them in unconventional spaces," she says. "I'm learning as I go."

—KARA NESVIG

## PEDRO PABLO LANDER

Whether Pedro Pablo Lander is dancing in contemporary spaces, performing at drag and burlesque venues, or reading to kids during the much-loved Drag Story Hour, their exuberance, fearlessness, and allure dazzles onstage.

Last June, Lander's *Holy Donā* was one of the highlights of Red Eye Theater's New Works 4 Weeks Festival. In the outlandish, spectacular performance, Lander drew on their experience training to be a priest.

"I grew up extremely Catholic," they say. "I was in seminary for a year. That created a rupture in my life... I had to get it out of my body."

Lander was interested in finding the connection between Catholic rites and drag culture. In the BDSM-filled piece, Lander's character, Doña Pepa, is crucified on a giant cross. They performed the first iteration of the show at a queer cabaret in Puerto Rico. After that, they were invited to show the work at Red Eye.

"To put it out there at this scale—for me, that was a lot of closure," Lander says.

A Jerome Hill Fellow, Lander is planning a trip to Argentina in 2020 where they will work on a piece about migration and revolutions. They hope to show the work in the Twin Cities next summer.

—SHEILA REGAN

## SHE SHE

Jenny Jorgensen and Kate Worum, the duo behind She She, knew they'd made it when the Mall of America invited them to create a massive mural on its walls.

Advertorial



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## How CBD can help you through the holidays

The Christmas and Chanukah seasons are upon us, and as the year brings families and loved ones closer to one another, it also brings them closer to stress and anxiety. The end of the year is hard on people. Money problems, cross-country travel and personal issues with family can sometimes bring stress and worry to people and signs of anxiety like suicide rates tend to be higher around the holidays.

Amid these worrying aspects of a traditionally cheery time of year, there's no wonder why people might seek out-of-the-box solutions, but there are also less weighty concerns: What to think up for that hard-to-buy-for family member, for instance.

One avenue thousands will be taking this year is the newly-minted market for CBD products, fresh from a yearlong innovation streak after the substance was federally legalized with 2018's Farm Bill.

Scientific conclusions are far from evident, but early studies have shown connections between CBD and the body's endocannabinoid system, or ECS, to regulate bodily functions. There's even a prescription epilepsy drug based on CBD.

Meanwhile, ordinary people have found many uses for CBD oils, flower and other products. Testimonials show they love CBD for their anxiety, insomnia, chronic pain problems, inflammation and other common issues.

What any newcomer to the CBD market, especially this time of year, will notice is that it can be hard to tell quality CBD products from junk. With the surge in the market there are so many newcomers and gas-station cannabis experts that you'd almost think there is a four-letter word.

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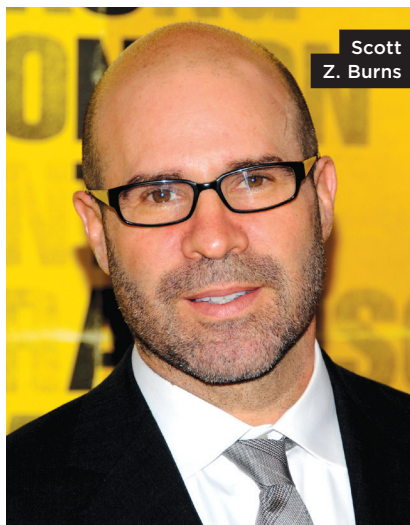
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She She



Scott  
Z. Burns

Bringing She She's work into your home will get even easier in 2020. "We're going to be heavily focusing on a cohesive collection of products that include textiles and home goods," Jorgensen says. "We're really excited to continue to cover the world in art."

—KARA NESVIG

#### SCOTT Z. BURNS

Though his credits include films such as *Side Effects*, *The Laundromat*, and *The Informant*, screenwriter-director Scott Z. Burns, a Golden Valley native and U of M grad, took on an unprecedented challenge in *The Report*.

The story follows lead investigator Daniel J. Jones (Adam Driver) into a seven-year deep dive of the "enhanced interrogation techniques" used by the CIA on suspected terrorists following 9/11. Ultimately, Jones produced a 6,700-page report, of which only a 500-page summary was publicly released.

"What I found so profoundly moving about the plight of Daniel Jones is this guy spent seven years trying to uncover the brutal realities of what our country did and it was lost to the next news cycle in 24 hours," Burns says. By making a movie about it, he hopes to save the story from the dustbin of history.

The film was released in theaters this fall. Burns says he has not experienced any backlash from political figures or other operatives named in the film, likely because by the time he came to the story in 2014, it had already been litigated publicly.

"It was my job in the film to depict it in as bipartisan and authentic a way as I possibly could," he says. Then, with a laugh: "That being said, if I turn up dead sometime in the next few weeks, please call the authorities."

Hopefully that won't happen, because Burns is currently at work on a new scripted TV musical series set in Minnesota. His collaborator? Craig Finn from the Hold Steady. Look for that project in 2020.

—ERICA RIVERA

Jorgensen is an interior designer by trade, while Worum is an illustrator. They met at a dinner party that ended with the two sitting on the floor looking at wallpaper samples. Both felt that there was something missing in the wallpaper industry. Thus, She She was born.

A quick scroll through She She's Instagram (@byshe) reveals both whimsy and sophistication: Glam chandelier illustrations set the tone for a dining room, adorable butts make a bathroom cheeky, colorful palm fronds transform a nursery.

"We want to create wallpaper that isn't a complement to the room, but uniquely is the room," explains Jorgensen. "We hope—and believe—that the storytelling and thoughtfulness behind our patterns create an experience... that is more of a lifestyle than a product."

She She has created designs with Delta Faucet, the aforementioned blue floral mural at MOA, and a piece for Sunbrella using ice cream.

While these are major achievements, the two feel that their biggest accomplishment this year was launching their online store. Three designs are currently available: the beloved "bums" print, a rustic cabin design, and a pretty, pastel lilac bird print.

SHE SHE: JUDITH MARILYN; SCOTT: AP

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Moe Yaqub

### MOE YAQUB

A former child actor in Pakistan, Moe Yaqub moved to America eight years ago for college. At the time he barely knew the English language, and certainly didn't aspire to standup comedy success. Three years ago, that all changed.

"I wanted to get back into acting. So I was thinking, 'Who is on TV that looks like me?'" he recalls. "The only person I could think of was Aziz Ansari." Google soon led him to discover Ansari's standup sets and Acme's open mic nights. "So I went down and performed. This all happened within the course of like, an hour."

A few years later, Yaqub has developed into one of the funniest and most captivating storytellers in the Twin Cities across any medium. In 2019, Yaqub managed to score national exposure on SiriusXM radio. He also won the House of Comedy's Funniest Person with a Day Job last summer.

As for his goals for 2020, Yaqub is hoping to produce more shows locally.

"I want to break the stereotypes about people from Pakistan," he says. "I have this whole rollercoaster of emotions, and I want to tell people that story in a funny, engaging way."

—PATRICK STRAIT

### JACK EL-HAI

On Saturday, November 10, 1951, the Klein brothers—Kenneth Jr., 8; David, 6; and Danny, 4—went to play at Farview Park in the Hawthorne neighborhood of north Minneapolis.

They never came home.

Days later, Minneapolis Police concluded (with miniscule evidence) that the boys had wandered down to the Mississippi River and drowned. Though no bodies were found, police closed the case. But the boys' parents, Kenneth and Betty, didn't buy it. They would continue to search for answers for the rest of their lives.



Jack El-Hai

One of the Kleins' search efforts was to place an advertisement in the Star Tribune every year around the anniversary of the disappearance. In 1997, a local writer, Jack El-Hai, happened to see the ad and called the phone number listed. He spoke the parents, and published an article about the case in Minnesota Monthly.

But El-Hai's interest in the story was far from over. He kept in touch with the Kleins, and, in 2013, he received an email from a Wright County sheriff's deputy, who was investigating the case in her spare time. The details of the boys' disappearance, the ongoing investigation, and new theories about this mysterious tragedy are cataloged in El-Hai's new book, *The Lost Brothers*.

The book has already spun off into a Twin Cities PBS podcast, *Long Lost*, which features interviews with Klein family members and parties involved in the investigation as well as audio from KSTP's 1951 coverage of the disappearance. El-Hai hopes that the book and the podcast "will jog some memories, encourage people to come forth with information maybe that they heard second- or even third-hand."

Because the case is almost 70 years old, and most of the people who were involved in the investigation are dead, a break is unlikely. But since the release of the book, El-Hai has received a few tips.

No matter where the Klein case leads,





Amber Bjork (right)  
in *Blood Nocturne*



Keith Hovis

El-Hai is already working on his next book, a narrative nonfiction story about a patient who had a successful face transplant following a suicide attempt. That story, surprisingly, has a much happier ending.

—ERICA RIVERA

#### AMBER BJORK

Theater artist Amber Bjork breaks the fourth wall to interrupt storytelling and allow artists to question their roles in plumbing historical records. She did so, for example, in Winding Sheet Outfit's 2018 show *Blood Nocturne*, about a woman with the dubious distinction of being history's most prolific female murderer.

"We had separate responses: people being thankful that we underlined this female story by breaking out and talking about it, and others who really did not like it," remembers Bjork.

Founded in 2012 by Bjork and Kristina Fjellman, Winding Sheet has since produced some of the hottest tickets on the Fringe scene. That includes this year's droll and poignant show about Edward Lear, and a Twin Cities Horror Festival entry that unpacked the creepy layers of Lewis Carroll.

In addition to densely researched detail and pointed moral questions, Winding Sheet shows are distinguished by creative vignettes,

ingenious props, inventive movement, and haunting original music.

This year, Bjork wants to produce a new show about "a really esoteric, traditional Swedish vision quest." That sounds like another eye-opener, which is exactly what Bjork likes. "I enjoy it when people go and want to learn more," she says. "That's my favorite reaction."

—JAY GABLER

#### KEITH HOVIS

Musical theater is experiencing a renaissance, and it's not just the *Hamilton* effect. Keith Hovis is part of a generation of young theater artists who love musicals—but who are ready to start telling some new stories, in new ways.

This year saw the Park Square Theatre premiere of a full-length version of his *Jefferson Township Sparkling Junior Talent Pageant*, a sweet but subversive show that originated as a Fringe production in 2017.

"It was a lot of work," he laughs. "I ended up writing about 17 different drafts." That included over 30 songs, which were whittled down to about 20 that made the final cut.

Hovis followed that springtime show with a wildly inventive, rapturously received Fringe original: *Edith Gets High*, starring Debra Berger as a woman who likes to toké up and play video games. A malicious troll attacks, taking Edith on an odyssey that shreds stereotypes while also poking affectionate fun at gaming tropes.

"What does it mean when the thing you love the most turns against you or is made to be a space where you don't feel welcome?" asks Hovis, citing the questions he wanted to explore.

You can expect to hear more from Hovis, and soon: Two upcoming projects include a Tyler Michaels collaboration and a musical created specifically as a podcast.

"In the Twin Cities, we're a very strong scene," he says. "But we also have the ability to take more chances."

—JAY GABLER

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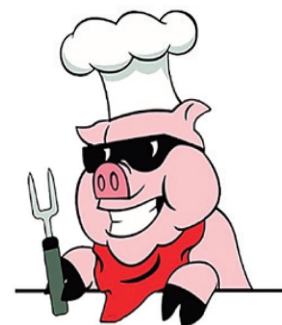
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# CHURCH BASEMENT REBOOT

Could vegan lutefisk reinvigorate a dying tradition?

BY CHARLIE GILLMER

It's lutefisk season again—that time of year when the gelatinous, translucent, lye-soaked whitefish makes its way into Scandinavian stomachs across Minnesota.

It's a great tradition, sure, but it's far from vegan.

I was born and raised in Minnesota by parents who went to St. Olaf. I have Swedish blood, was confirmed in the Lutheran church, yet somehow I didn't try lutefisk until college. When I finally tasted it, I really enjoyed it. About two years later, I became vegan, and I was met with a void in my holiday diet.

Ever since, I've wanted to try a vegan version of lutefisk.

With zero confidence in my kitchen skills, I have no plans to make a fish-free rendition for myself. So I turned to the Herbivorous Butcher to see what they had to say about attempting a plant-based version of the Nordic delicacy.

Collin Sandoe, kitchen manager at the vegan butcher shop, is a believer in swapping traditional meat dishes out for vegan imitations. “I like doing more traditional things, and I think lutefisk would be an interesting one,” he says.

Making it, he says, helps preserve what made that food special in the first place. “There's so much tradition that gives it its soul,” he says. “Just coming up with a whole new dish, I think you'd be doing a disservice to all these thousands and tens of thousands of years of culinary tradition.”

Their store in northeast Minneapolis has had success selling vegan turkeys for Thanksgiving. Turkey, Sandoe points out, is “not a trendy thing, it's not a health thing, it's not a cutting-edge meal. But it's the cornerstone of a holiday, so people rely on it.” That also describes lutefisk, but for a smaller portion of the population.

At the Herbivorous Butcher, they've experimented with faux fish in the past, including making some smoked herring, but lutefisk would be a whole different challenge. Because the dish doesn't have a traditional fish texture, Sandoe thinks they would have to try something new.

“A texture like that,” he says of the gelatinous nature of lutefisk, “I think, is found in other things that are vegan.” He suggested something like agar, a seaweed-derived thickener, as the base ingredient, possibly mixed with the wheat gluten they use in a lot of their meats.

It doesn't look like vegan lutefisk will be arriving in stores soon, but it's not too crazy to imagine it could next year.



CHELSEA ZONA

The question of could is one thing. Should is another. This led directly to my proudly Swedish grandparents and great uncle.

Because my parents have zero affection for lutefisk, it was my maternal grandparents who gave me my first taste of the jellied fish. These same grandparents go to a lutefisk supper every year. At first, I thought the unique preparation of lutefisk was what kept people interested. But according to them, it's hardly about the lutefisk.

“A lot of people,” my grandma acknowledges, “go to lutefisk dinners just because they like to be with all the Swedes wearing their Scandinavian sweaters.” Many of those people, she says, “will eat the meatballs and the vegetables and all the stuff that goes with it, but they don't actually eat the lutefisk.”

My grandparents aren't in that camp, but it seems they aren't that far removed. “I think the smell is worse than the taste,” my grandma says of the delicacy. “And the feel isn't the greatest,” added my grandpa.

Though my grandpa has been around lutefisk his whole life, he admits, “I didn't eat it until about oh,

six, seven years ago, then I really liked it.” But that may be his limit. “This year I'm having trouble. I'm afraid I'm losing my taste for it.”

For his part, my great uncle was much more staunch in his

dislike. When my grandma suggested we have lutefisk on Christmas Eve, he couldn't even stand to hear the whole question before disagreeing.

It seems you could remove the lutefisk—or swap it out for something else—and as long as the sweaters, music, and Scandinavian spirit remain, most of the

community would show up. This bodes well for vegan lutefisk finding a place on the menu one day.

When I asked Sandoe his thoughts on why lutefisk has stuck around, he echoed this sentiment. “It's hard to disentangle tradition from the flavor or the nutritional aspect or the appearance or the texture. I think those are all reasons that people eat foods, but it might just be tradition that's keeping lutefisk in the, I guess, not-quite-popular lexicon.”

The tradition, though, may not last much longer. “When you go to these lutefisk dinners you don't see very many young people,” my grandma says.

“When you do see one, it's a surprise,” my grandpa says.

It's possible young people who aren't going to these suppers could attend when they get older, but what if the negative images conjured by lutefisk lead our generation to sacrifice tradition for taste like our parents' generation has? Or what if so much of this generation is vegan or vegetarian that they don't want to pay to wait in line to not even eat the entrée? Might vegan lutefisk be the answer?

To further consider these possibilities, I enlisted help from St. Paul native and fellow vegan Kaia Wahmanholm.

Wahmanholm, who's embraced her Norwegian roots far more than I've embraced my Swedish ones, says she “would definitely try vegan lutefisk.” “I have been to a couple of church basement-type events this season,” Wahmanholm says, “and while they are mostly attended by members of the older generations, what you really need to grab the millennial generation's attention is to create a millennial base, so why not start with vegans?”

But vegan lutefisk alone may not be enough to draw new faces into the fold. As Wahmanholm points out: “Lutefisk is simply a way of eating butter under the guise of enjoying a food that has foul repute. While I did enjoy lutefisk before I went vegan, I can't help but think what I really enjoyed was just butter.”

Instead, she says, “Maybe vegan meatballs would be easier and less... well... lutefisky.”

Or maybe the meat-averse could be brought into the fold by even further embracing tradition. “My father used to tell us,” my grandpa recounts, “that they would take a codfish, nail it to a board, put it in a barrel of lye, take it out, scrape the cod off, and eat the board.”



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PALACE THEATRE

JAN  
30

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**SOUL ASYLUM**  
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DEC  
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MARCHANTE, INDIGO CREW, & MORE

DEC  
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TOTALLY '80s**  
A NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION  
FT. DJ JAKE RUDH

DEC  
31



**G. LOVE &  
SPECIAL SAUCE**  
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JAN  
10



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JAN  
11



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JAN  
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JAN  
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MAE SIMPSON, MUUN BATO,  
NUR-D, UNDER VIOLET

JAN  
25



**THRICE**  
WITH mewwithoutYou,  
DRUG CHURCH, HOLY FAWN

JAN  
30



**JJ GREY & MOFRO**  
WITH FREDDY & FRANCINE

FEB  
07

## PALACE THEATRE



**MICHAEL  
KIWANUKA**

FEB  
03



**KING PRINCESS**

FEB  
04



**GRACE POTTER**  
WITH DEVON GILFILLIAN

FEB  
08



**CALEXICO AND  
IRON & WINE**  
WITH MADISON CUNNINGHAM

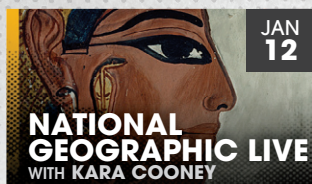
FEB  
14



**TOVE LO**  
WITH ALMA

FEB  
20

## FITZGERALD THEATER



**NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC LIVE**  
WITH KARA COONEY

JAN  
12



**MAT KEARNEY**  
WITH ELI TEPLIN

FEB  
04



**LADYSMITH BLACK  
MAMBAZO**

MAR  
01



**KAMASI  
WASHINGTON**


MAR  
04



**NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC LIVE**  
WITH MARK SYNNOTT

MAR  
08

## FINE LINE



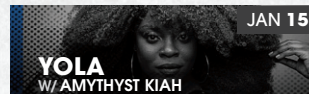
**QUEER CIRCUS**  
HOSTED BY GABE GABRIEL THE LADY  
MARTINA MARRACCINO

DEC  
27



**HOLD YOUR LADY  
TIGHT NIGHT**  
W/ HELLO HEARTACHE, COLE DIAMOND

JAN  
10



**YOLA**  
W/ AMYTHYST KIAH

JAN  
15



**RUN WESTY RUN**  
W/ LOKI'S FOLLY

DEC  
25



**GULLY BOYS**  
W/ tiny deaths, LYDIA LIZA

DEC  
29



**NORTH MISSISSIPPI  
ALLSTARS**  
W/ SOUTHERN AVENUE

JAN  
18




**YOUR SMITH**  
W/ CHELSEA JADE

JAN  
21



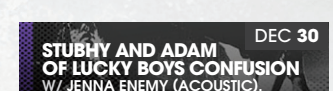
**RON POPE**  
W/ CAROLINE SPENCE

JAN  
22



**JUNIPER DOUGLAS**  
W/ DREAMS WE'VE HAD, SIGHT,  
PETER CAMPANELLI

DEC  
26



**STUBBY AND ADAM  
OF LUCKY BOYS CONFUSION**  
W/ JENNA ENEMY (ACOUSTIC),  
THE WRIGHT COUNTY POUR BOYS

DEC  
30

## TURF CLUB



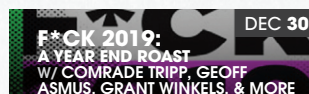
**ALL  
TOMORROW'S PETTY**  
W/ ALPHA CONSUMER

DEC  
26



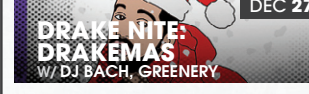
**HEIRUSPECS  
HOLIDAY CLASSIC**  
W/ MaLLy, DJ DAN SPEAK

DEC  
27



**F\*CK 2019:  
A YEAR END ROAST**  
W/ COMRADE TRIPP, GEOFF  
ASMUS, GRANT WINKELS, & MORE

DEC  
30



**DRAKE NITE:  
DRAKEMAS**  
W/ DJ BACH, GREENERY

DEC  
27



**HINDSIGHT 2020:  
A 90s VS 00s NEW YEAR'S EVE**  
FT. YOU OUGHTA KNOW

DEC  
31




**SHREDDERS**  
W/ THE BAD MAN, LUNCH DUCHESS

DEC  
31



**ABBASolutely FAB**  
W/ DJ FREDDY HUSBANDS

JAN  
03



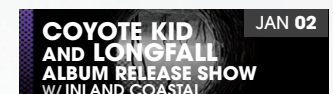
**RACHAEL KILGOUR**  
W/ LAURA HUGO

JAN  
04



**OKLAHOMA  
ALBUM RELEASE**  
W/ ALINA MAIRA, ST HARRISON

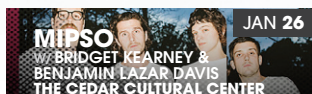
DEC  
28



**COYOTE KID  
AND LONGFALL  
ALBUM RELEASE SHOW**  
W/ INLAND COASTAL

JAN  
02

## AROUND TOWN



**MIPSO**  
W/ BRIDGET KEARNEY &  
BENJAMIN LAZAR DAVIS  
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

JAN  
26



**POPPY**  
W/ VOWWS  
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

JAN  
30



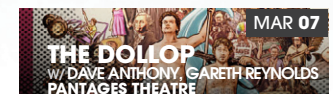
**MAGIC CITY HIPPIES**  
W/ TIM ATLAS  
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

FEB  
01



**NATHANIEL RATELIFF**  
W/ COURTNEY MARIE ANDREWS  
STATE THEATRE

MAR  
03



**THE DOLLOP**  
W/ DAVE ANTHONY, GARETH REYNOLDS  
PANTAGES THEATRE

MAR  
07



# A LIST

**SATURDAY** Lizz Winstead reflects on the decade p. 19

**MONDAY** Comedians roast 2019 p. 19

**TUESDAY** Parties and more to celebrate 2020 p. 19

THURSDAY 12.26

## PARTY

### BED, BATH, AND BEYONCÉ: DANCE PARTY

HONEY MPLS

The day after Christmas, some will be ready to escape the family for a night of fun. For others, this is just like any other week, and they're ready to start the weekend a little early. No matter what your vibe is this Thursday, Flip Phone is throwing a party that is all about Beyoncé. For nearly five hours, DJ Ariesfirebomb will take you on a journey through the Beyhive's favorite anthems. Expect deep cuts from Destiny's Child, plus megahits from B's solo albums, from *Dangerously in Love* all the way to *Lemonade*. Pop-up drag performances throughout the night will keep the glamour in full-effect. 21+. 9:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$10. 205 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-746-0304. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

FRIDAY 12.27

## COMEDY/NYE

### END OF THE DECADE COMEDY WEEKEND

NEW HOPE CINEMA GRILL

It's the end of the decade, and New Hope Cinema Grill is having a three-night comedy blowout that is worthy of a countdown. Tiffany Norton, who has been the queen of New Year's Eve in New Hope for years, will play the role of feature act on Friday and Saturday, before taking the headliner slot for the big year-end show. Norton has been one of the most impressive comedy stories of the past decade, transforming from part-time performer to must-see headliner at night, all while waking up early as part of KS95's morning show. The dark-but-hilarious Gabe Noah will join her as headliner on Friday. He's been performing in clubs around town for years, but has more recently become known for his fascinating and funny *Profession Confession* podcast, where he gets the lowdown on some of the most salacious jobs in town. On Saturday, Miss Shannan Paul will take the



Minneapolis Cider Company harks back to the Roaring '20s for New Year's Eve.

GETTY IMAGES

headlining slot. Miss Shannan is a bright spot on the Twin Cities scene, whether she's cracking jokes on MyTalk 107 FM or geeking out on *The Jason Show*. 8:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and New Year's Eve. \$19. 2749 Winnetka Ave. N., New Hope; 763-417-0017. **Through New Year's Eve —PATRICK STRAIT**

## THEATER

### PETER PAN AND WENDY

MIXED BLOOD THEATRE COMPANY

The story of *Peter Pan* gets transformed in this new two-person re-telling of the classic tale. The production features a cast and design team made up of trans artists, giving audiences a chance to see Neverland like they've never imagined it before. In this version, Peter and Wendy are young adults. Together, they explore new worlds, awkwardness, secrets, and wonder. Starring C. Michael Menge (they/them) as Peter and Henry Ellen Sansone (he/him) as Wendy,

the cast hopes to make this your new, queered-up holiday tradition. The two actors, along with Andi Mickel (he/him or they/them) make up the Boys of the Year, a performance group that uses theater to explore joy, imagination, and trans experiences. Find tickets at brownpapertickets.com. 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sunday, and Monday. \$5-\$50 sliding scale (no one turned away for lack of funds). 1501 S. Fourth St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6131. **Through Monday —SHEILA REGAN**

## COMEDY

### GEOFFREY ASMUS

SISYPHUS BREWING

Geoffrey Asmus is going to read the Bible onstage this weekend. But he'll probably cuss a bunch, too. The Woodbury native, now residing in New York, is back in town for the holidays, and will be recording his debut album this Friday and Saturday at Sisypheus. Religion is a topic that plays

a pretty heavy role in Asmus' comedy, as he got into performing standup at the same time he was studying it in college. "Religion is something that really shapes the world in incredible ways, and people don't really know enough about it," Asmus says. "I wanted to learn about all of the religions, and then I realized they're all really the same fucking thing." But Asmus still finds himself fascinated by it. "A lot of people come at it from an angle like, 'Oh, religion is stupid.' But I try not to do that, because I think it's been done. I try to poke fun, but I still believe in it. Once people in conservative places realize that I'm one of them, they usually loosen up and laugh." If you feel like you've had enough religion over the holidays, Asmus says that his shows won't be a sermon. "I get really interested in religion and write jokes about it for a while, then I completely

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ►





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## OUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

1. Send beer to St. Cloud, Mankato & Rochester
2. Throw more parties
3. Don't make a seltzer
4. Continue to be a safe space for people of all walks of life to feel comfortable & welcomed
5. Support your cause (hit us up)
6. Make a Dungeons & Dragons beer with Jeremy Messersmith
7. Book Lizzo to play a flute-only set with Cautious Clay

8. (Only read this one if you want us to make more lagers)
9. Turn 4 years old (come party)
10. Should we become the 4th food hall in North Loop?
11. Continue to push the boundaries of how stupid beer names can be
12. Make 100 new beers
13. Get better at karate
14. Baby Yoda collab



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## A-LIST

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

lose interest and write jokes about sex or weed for a month.” Joining Asmus both nights will be local favs Ellie Hino and Ryan Kahl, who will likely just do comedy and not proselytize. But who knows for sure? 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$10. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Minneapolis. 612-444-8674. **Through Saturday —PATRICK STRAIT**

### DANCE NIGHT HIPSHAKER

KITTY CAT KLUB

This week, beloved dance night Hipshaker is pulling a doubleheader, hosting its regular dance night on Friday, and then teaming up with Hotpants for a big ol’ New Year’s Eve party. Since 2002, Hipshaker has spun funk and rare soul on vinyl. Its hosting crew includes DJs Brian Engel, Greg Waletski, and George Rodriguez. On Tuesday, the trio will collab with Hotpants, sharing their records and tunes at top volume until 2019 is no more. Expect a healthy dose of that funk and soul both are known for, as well as blues, Latin, and modern soul (think Sharon Jones, Marvin Gaye, and Amy Winehouse). 21+. 9 p.m. \$5 Friday; \$20 New Year’s Eve. 315 14th Ave. SE, Minneapolis; 612-331-9800. **Also New Year’s Eve —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

### SATURDAY 12.28

#### COMEDY/NYE

### LIZZ WINSTEAD: SHARKNADO X

THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

When recounting the entire history of civilization, the past 10 years is just a blip. But when you’re living through a decade of political malaise, cultural anxiety, economic uncertainty, and environmental deterioration, things can feel like a series of escalating catastrophes. Thankfully, Lizz Winstead, the socially astute comic who co-created satirical news staple *The Daily Show*, has been here all the while to provide cathartic laughter at her popular New Year’s Eve retrospectives. In recapping 365 days’ worth of absurdities, Winstead brings an insightful perspective, infusing the most exasperating events with much needed levity. Winstead, accompanied by guitarist Sam Breckenridge, will evoke laughter from this period of prolonged tension, hopefully imbuing a bit of hope as we enter a new decade. 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 7:30 p.m. New Year’s Eve. \$50/\$60; \$70 VIP. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. **Also New Year’s Eve —BRAD RICHASON**



NEW LINE CINEMA

### SUNDAY 12.29

#### FILM

### THE LORD OF THE RINGS MARATHON

RIVERVIEW THEATER

In the history of moviemaking, few projects have been as ambitious as *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Directed by Peter Jackson, the three films were shot concurrently over several years, resulting in a richly conceptualized vision of Tolkien’s revered fantasy adventure. The Riverview Theater will be hosting an epic daylong viewing, beginning with *The Fellowship of the Ring* at 10:45 a.m., followed by *The Two Towers* at 2:45 p.m., and concluding with *The Return of the King* at 7 p.m. These screenings will all consist of the authoritative director’s cut, taking viewers on a 730-minute odyssey with hobbits Frodo and Sam as they venture forth from their idyllic Shire, braving peril and demonic adversaries in order to reach the hellish land of Mordor, where they’ll cast the soul corrupting One Ring into the volcanic fires of Mount Doom. While watching the three films back-to-back is certain to make for an immersive cinematic experience, the reality of staring at a screen for such a prolonged period is equally sure to invite a lethargic mind. Thankfully, the Riverview will fill the time between screenings with diversions, including door prizes and costume contests, and pizza will be available. 10:45 a.m.; 2:45 p.m.; 7 p.m. \$12/\$15; includes all three screenings. 3800 42nd Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-729-7369. **—BRAD RICHASON**

### MONDAY 12.30

#### COMEDY

### F\*CK 2019: A YEAR END ROAST

TURF CLUB

Weird year, huh? With all this impeachment stuff, Kanye making a gospel album, and that Drake speech after the Raptors won the NBA title, there’s plenty of things that have happened to make us say, “Come the fuck on?!!” For one night, comedians Rana May, Shelly Paul, Comrade Tripp, Geoff Asmus, Grant Winkels, and Joey Hamburger will come together for a merciless roast of everything that has gone horribly wrong these past 365 days. If you’ve never been to one of these year-end roasts, know that it’s a combo of standup, old-school trash-talk roasting, skits, songs, and general insanity that has to be seen. Most importantly, it gives you the chance to laugh and feel less alone about some of the horrible things we’ve had to deal with this year. Otherwise, you can always skip the show and go see that *Cats* movie with Jason Derulo, which is even more proof that 2019 has been completely fucked up. 7:30 p.m. \$15. 1601 University Ave. W., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

### TUESDAY 12.31

#### NYE

### ROARING ’20S NEW YEARS EVE

MINNEAPOLIS CIDER COMPANY

For this sweet New Year’s Eve party, Minneapolis Cider Company is going back 100 years to the Roaring ’20s. Taking inspiration from Minnesota’s

own F. Scott Fitzgerald, this *Gatsby*-themed shindig will have a healthy dose of glam seediness. Think speakeasy vibes, plenty of bottles popping, and sparkly flapper dresses and shiny spats (the encouraged attire for the evening). A special cocktail menu will be available, and the midnight toast will feature a free round of the pub’s unique offering of the night, Resolution #1. Tunes will be provided by the Gatsby Gang Jazz Band. Find tickets at eventbrite.com. 21+. 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$25. 701 SE Ninth St., Minneapolis; 612-886-1357. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

#### COMEDY/NYE

### NEW YEAR’S EVE COMEDY AND DANCE PARTY

DANCE LOVE STUDIO

Why choose between comedy, dancing, and partying into the New Year? Dance Love Studio will have the best of all three on New Year’s Eve, with comedians Ali Sultan, Greg Coleman, Shawn Nasfstad, and Abenezzer Merdassa providing the jokes. Sultan and Coleman are two of the most seasoned headliners in town, and both are worth the price of admission on their own. Meanwhile, Nafstad and Merdassa are two of the fastest-rising up-and-coming voices in comedy. Get there early, as the comedy will get the party started for the evening at 9 p.m. From there, you can get up and move with a mini dance lesson from Hanna Esparza, then hit the open floor starting at 10:45 p.m. with DJ Salman and DJ Luv. You’ll be able to count down to the New Year at midnight, celebrate with a toast, sloppily hug and high-five everyone, and then keep the party going until 2 a.m. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$20/\$30 at the door. 2601 Second Ave. S., Minneapolis. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

#### NYE

### NEW YEARS EVE BASH

BRIT’S PUB

As far as New Year’s Eve celebrations go, Brit’s has a few things going for it. First, there’s no cover charge, which is a rarity on this night. Two, they actually will have happy hour specials from 4:30 to 6 p.m., which entails a selection of \$5 pints. For those who prefer to be in bed before the ball drop, you can celebrate on British time instead, as the bar will usher in the U.K. New Year with bagpipes and bubbly at 6 p.m. For those who prefer to stay up late, the party will continue upstairs until the wee hours, with Beatles tribute band A Hard Day’s Night playing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 ►



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<b>DEC 27</b> <b>NAZAAR</b> W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	<b>DEC 28</b> <b>MITIS</b> W/ WILLIAM BLACK, CRYSTAL SKIES & MORE 	<b>JAN 04</b> <b>KLEAVR X TANTRUM</b> W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	<b>JAN 10</b> <b>MEGALODON X WHALES</b> W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 
<b>JAN 11</b> <b>SLEEPING WITH SIRENS</b> W/ SET IT OFF, BELMONT & POINT NORTH 	<b>JAN 11</b> <b>DIRTYSNATCHA</b> W/ LEV3L 	<b>JAN 24</b> <b>AKYLLA</b> W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	<b>JAN 25</b> <b>TISOKI</b> W/ MINESWEEPA 
<b>JAN 31</b> <b>VINCENT</b> W/ PRINCE FOX 	<b>FEB 01</b> <b>SUBTRONICS</b> W/ HESH, CHEE, BOMMER & LEVEL UP 	<b>FEB 12</b> <b>THOUXANBANFAUNI X TEEJAYX6</b> W/ PAQRAT & ECHOASTRAL 	<b>FEB 14</b> <b>NOIZU</b> VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY 
<b>FEB 15</b> <b>MATOMA X TWO FRIENDS</b> CAMP SUPERDOPE! TOUR 	<b>FEB 16</b> <b>MACHINE HEAD</b> 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR 	<b>FEB 19</b> <b>MC LARS</b> W/ THE DOUBLECLICKS 	<b>FEB 21</b> <b>VADER</b> W/ ABYSMAL DAWN & HIDEOUS DIVINITY 
<b>FEB 22</b> <b>PEEKABOO</b> W/ TRUTH, ZEKE BEATS & ISOXD 	<b>FEB 23</b> <b>MOTHERFOLK</b> W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	<b>FEB 29</b> <b>EKALI</b> A WORLD AWAY TOUR 	<b>MAR 07</b> <b>BLUNTS &amp; BLONDES</b> W/ SUBDOCTA & BAWLDY 
<b>MAR 13</b> <b>FLAW</b> W/ GABRIEL AND THE APOCALYPSE 	<b>MAR 13</b> <b>BOOGIE T.RIO</b> RIDDIM & BLUES TOUR 	<b>MAR 14</b> <b>BLACK TIGER SEX MACHINE</b> W/ APASHE, BLANKE & VAMPA 	<b>MAR 20</b> <b>SLANDER</b> THE EYE FT. DYLAN MATTHEW 
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Flip Phone celebrates  
2020 with a  
'90s-themed party.

DARIN KAMNETZ

CONTINUED FROM TUESDAY ►

tunes starting at 8:30 p.m., and there will be another champagne toast at midnight, central time. 6 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Free. 1110 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-3908. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

NYE

## 90'S NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

AMSTERDAM BAR AND HALL

Around town this year, you can find a New Year's Eve party celebrating the decade of your choice. At Amsterdam in downtown St. Paul, the Flip Phone crew are all about the 1990s. DJs izzie p and Sasha R. Cassadine will be playing the hits of the decade, which brought us iconic rap anthems, delightfully cringey hip-hop, bubblegum pop, heavy metal, alternative, and more. There will be prizes for those who rock the best '90s looks, so consider checking out an old Delia's catalog or watching a *Yo! MTV Raps* episode on YouTube for inspiration. Pop-up drag performances will entertain crowds throughout the night as revelers count down the seconds until 2020. 18+. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$20. 6 W. Sixth St., St. Paul; 612-285-3112. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

NYE

## 2020 NYE BASH

JAMES BALLENTINE "UPTOWN"  
VFW - POST 246

This New Year's Eve, your friendly Uptown VFW is keeping things chill with a night of music and DJ sets in the main entertainment room. The event, curated by DJs Shannon Blowtorch and Fundo McGee, will feature tunes, performances, and spectacle from the likes of DJs Just Nine and YSHEYELLIN, delightful geek

rapper NUR-D, drag king extraordinaire MPLS Adonia, and visual installation artist FNK. There's no pre-sale for this party; simply show up early with \$20. 21+. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$20. 2916 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-823-6233. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

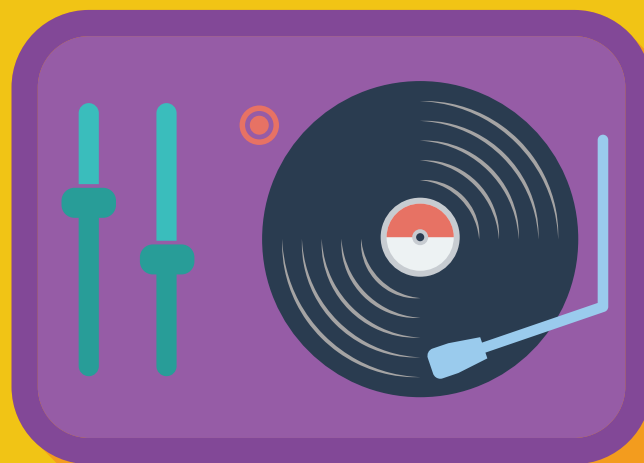
COMEDY/NYE

## EAST COAST-STYLE NEW YEAR'S EVE

SISYPHUS BREWING

For anyone who loves to celebrate but also likes going to bed a reasonable time, Maggie Faris has your back. Faris is once again presenting her East Coast-Style New Year's Eve event, with a stacked lineup of comedians and plenty of surprises. The best part? Each show ends with a full-blown New Year's countdown (the late show ends at 11 p.m., or midnight on the East Coast—get it?), with champagne and confetti and all the pomp and circumstance you could ask for for \$25 bucks. This year's shows will feature Faris, alongside Amber Preston, who made her mark as an Acme regular before taking over Los Angeles the past several years, and headliner David Dyer, who is best known as part of the *Bob and Tom* radio show. One of the staples of Faris' events has become her affinity for booby prizes, and this year's East Coast blowout will be no exception. Trust us, they will be ridiculous. There are two sets, giving you plenty of time to get home and relieve the babysitter before the "real" parties start, or sneak off to another bar to watch the ball drop and countdown to midnight for real. 7 and 9 p.m. \$25. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Minneapolis; 612-444-8674. —PATRICK STRAIT

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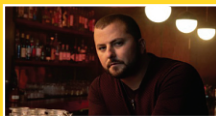
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FILM

# MR. SAND MAN

You won't believe how good Adam Sandler is in *Uncut Gems*



A24

BY TONY LIBERA

It's wild that people are still sleeping on Adam Sandler in 2019.

I mean, I get it. The dude has made some bad, bad movies. I've seen *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*.

But with *Punch-Drunk Love*, *Funny People*, and *The Meyerowitz Stories*, Sandler has proven he's a lot more talented than his goofy-schlub routine suggests. Still, in larger American culture, he doesn't get his due. *Uncut Gems* might finally change that.

Set in 2012 New York City, the film chronicles the everyday fuckups of jeweler and gambling addict Howard Ratner (Sandler). He's the kind of person ballsy enough to pawn an NBA superstar's championship ring and place a bet with the money—which is exactly what he does when Kevin Garnett walks into his store. KG wants to borrow an uncut Ethiopian opal for good luck against the Sixers, so Howie takes the ring as collateral and starts making moves. This would be dumb in and of itself, but Ratner's also outrunning his brother-in-law Arno (Eric Bogosian), who's sent a couple thugs to collect on a debt. And if that weren't enough, he's been cheating on his wife (Idina Menzel) with a young employee (Julia Fox).

What a guy. He could be president.

There's an old creative writing maxim that says you need to put your character through hell, and the Safdie brothers do it with zeal. If you've seen *Good Time*, you know how much they revel in twisting the knife. Anything that can go wrong does go wrong. It's even worse here—and even better screenwriting—because Ratner has countless opportunities to get himself out of trouble but doubles down on being a dumbass. You'd think getting stripped naked and locked in the trunk of a car would be a wakeup call, but Ratner can't help pushing his luck.

The train wreck that follows makes *Uncut Gems* impossible to ignore, with Josh and Benny Safdie emerging as two of the more interesting filmmakers working today. It's crazy how capably they hold an audience at just 35 and 33 years old respectively. Word is they're redoing *48 Hrs.* soon, which marks the only time I've ever been excited for a classic movie remake.

Writing for a Twin Cities paper, I'd be remiss if I didn't give a big shoutout to the Minnesota GOAT, KG. He's playing a version of himself, but that in no way diminishes how good Garnett is here. It's not necessarily a shock given his famous

## UNCUT GEMS

directed by Josh and Benny Safdie  
area theaters, opens December 24

intensity and dedication. It's just rare that a sports legend shows this degree of acting prowess. I don't think it'll be the last time we see *The Big Ticket* on the big screen.

That said, Adam Sandler makes the spotlight his own. There are still some minor Sandlerisms; however, his take on Ratner feels leagues different from past roles—even his other dramatic work. There's the occasional goof and some somber turns as the character hits rock bottom, but Ratner's brazenness—and at times even swagger—show Sandler operating on another level. When he and Garnett sit across from one another near the end of the picture, Ratner connects his wheeling and dealing to what KG does on the court. "This is how I win," he says, eyes hidden behind a pair of shades. The great power forward gets it. If it weren't for Joaquin Phoenix's execution in *Joker*, Sandler would have a legitimate shot at some Best Actor hardware. Nobody could imagine that in the *Little Nicky* era. It just goes to show, anything is possiblellllllleeeeeeeeeee. **GF**



# BEST OF THE '10S

Remembering the decade's top productions



Is God Is

RICH RYAN

BY JAY GABLER

Theater is by nature fleeting: a show happens, and then it's gone. The best productions, though, stick with you forever. Here are 10 Twin Cities shows from the '10s that were impossible to forget.

## **Glensheen, History Theatre (2015-19)**

A notorious double murder in Duluth's historic mansion was also a pathetic, desperate act. This darkly comic original musical by Jeffrey Hatcher and Chan Poling captured the fascinating sweep of the family drama behind the undesired deaths of two women on one fateful night in 1977.

## **Harold, Four Humors Theater (2012-17)**

The Twin Cities Horror Festival, launched by Four Humors artists in 2012, has become an annual showcase of variously macabre productions. None have outdone this truly terrifying fable about domestic abuse, with a murderous scarecrow rustling in the dark.

## **Is God Is, Mixed Blood Theatre (2018)**

Aleshea Harris' shocking script had Mixed Blood audiences riveted in a visceral production anchored by a towering performance from Dame-Jasmine Hughes, the best actor to emerge on Twin Cities stages this decade.

## **Jitney, Penumbra Theatre (2016)**

Penumbra's productions of August Wilson plays, under the direction of Lou Bellamy, are legend. This masterclass in ensemble

acting showed why, in an utterly absorbing production staged with meticulous attention to detail.

## **Miss Bennet, Jungle Theater (2017-19)**

The decade's most stunning success story was Sarah Rasmussen's transformation of the dusty Jungle into a can't-miss showcase for superb new plays. This one overflows with such heart, warmth, and wit, it leaves your eyes moist and your heart practically bursting out of your chest.

## **Mr. Burns, Guthrie Theater (2015)**

The Guthrie struggled to market this show without saying, "It's a *Simpsons* dystopia play!" This extraordinarily rich production created a fascinating alternate universe where Bart and Sideshow Bob have become twisted and elevated to foundational figures of a new society.

## **Ragtime, Theater Latté Da (2016)**

Peter Rothstein's company achieved a remarkable string of successes this decade, finding a happy permanent home in the Ritz Theater. This deeply moving show used that focused space to great effect, drawing viewers into an urgent American tragedy staged with fearless drive.

## **The Thing, Samantha Johns and George McConnell (2010)**

Two independent theater artists took over a DIY basement space, filled it with eclectic props, and devised a show with a completely trusting group of collaborators. The result was pure magic and completely unclassifiable.

## **Two Mile Hollow, Theater Mu and Mixed Blood Theatre (2018)**

A richly entertaining and sharply satirical production of Leah Nanako Winkler's brilliant script that exposes stereotypes by casting Asian-American performers in the roles of a wealthy WASP family. Several of this decade's standout actors shone onstage together.

## **West Side Story, Guthrie Theater (2018)**

The Statue of Liberty hung ominously askew in this bracing production, which took big risks and found fresh relevance in a Broadway classic. Director Joseph Haj was at his best, demonstrating a confident new vision for the storied Guthrie.



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COURTESY OF THE BAND

# NO SUDDEN MOVES

With *Can You Really Find Me*, Night Moves methodically construct a sound that's built to last

BY HALEE HASTAD

Night Moves takes its time. “I knew back in high school that when I started this band, I didn’t want it to be some ephemeral thing where you’re really embarrassed about it three weeks after you release something,” says the band’s singer and guitarist, John Pelant. “I wanted to make stuff that I liked to listen to, and that has stuck as my thing, that more permanent effect to the music. I don’t want it to be disposable.”

*Can You Really Find Me*, which appeared this past June, is the band’s first album in three years, and even in December it summons up a peaceful beach scene or a long cry after the most perfect summer day. Its moody grooves are equally suited to chilling or dancing, its string flourishes contribute a new air of sophistication, and Pelant’s voice, which so often was a murmur buried in the mix, is now bolder and more prominent.

Celtic music plays softly in a Whittier bar where I meet Pelant and bassist Mickey Alfano, and the two soon get to talking about how they’d met in high school through a mutual skateboarding friend. They’d played in separate bands as teens, but after graduation Alfano joined as bassist while Pelant was recording *Colored Emotions*, Night Moves’ first album, in 2012.

“I think the key was and still is to take things step by step,” Pelant says. “The biggest thing that I wanted was to have *Colored Emotions* come out on vinyl and then we got signed to Domino so that was even better because that meant it came out in the U.S. and in England.”

Since then, the band has toured in support of big names like Lord Huron and Father John Misty. They’ve undergone lineup changes, with keyboardist Mark Ritsema leaving to form Suzie while drummer Mark Hanson and guitarist Chuck Murlowski joined the team. And they’ve released just

two more albums: *Can You Really Find Me* and its 2016 predecessor, *Pennied Days*.

The methodical process of crafting a Night Moves track begins in Pelant’s apartment mini-studio. Here, surrounded by keyboards, pedals, an amplifier, a tape machine, and a recording interface, he demos their songs, which may remain in the works for months, even years.

For instance, Pelant had begun work on “Mexico,” the opening track on *Can You Really Find Me*, way back during *Pennied Days*. “It wasn’t really ready for production,” he says. “It’s a quality care type thing. I want all of the songs to be right.”

Once Pelant is confident with something he’s made he brings it to his bandmates. With their feedback, Pelant returns home to tinker further. He lives with these pieces, he says, testing them repeatedly, through various seasons and times of the day, during different feelings and moods.

“We never just go into the studio and vibe,” Pelant says. “It’s highly structured, and everything is mapped out from the thorough demoing process.”

Then it’s on to the production stage. For their debut, the band worked with the relatively hands-off Thom Monahan in L.A. For the follow-up, Jim Agnello, known for his work with the Hold Steady and Kurt Vile, interjected himself more forcefully into the process. For *Can You Really Find Me* they travelled to Austin, Texas to work with Jim Eno, the drummer of respected alt-rock veterans Spoon, with a specific goal in mind.

“Jim was always on our radar as a producer option, as we admired his work in Spoon,” Pelant says. “Also, him being a drummer was a plus because we wanted to focus in on drum tones for this album and make sure they were great. We emailed him, and he got back to us rather quickly. We then hopped on the phone and the ball just started rolling.”

And the drums on *Can You Really Find Me* are more prominent, as are Pelant’s vocals,

which sound more confident than ever as his lyrics dig into self-reflection, memorializing time’s passing, love come, and love lost.

On “Waiting for the Symphony” Pelant laments with remorse for holding out for something he knew would never come (“I shouldn’t have spent the time/Aw, shouldn’t have spent the time”) while “Angelina” raises the question, “Would you still want me/

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**Saturday, December 28th and Tuesday, December 31st**  
The Cedar Presents  
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A Hilarious Look Back at the Year and Decade with Sam Breckenridge  
Saturday Matinee Doors 1PM / Show 2PM  
Evening Doors 6:30pm / Show 7:30pm  
All Ages / Seated / \$50 ADV / \$60 DOS / \$70 VIP

**Thursday, January 9th**  
The Cedar Presents  
**LE VENT DU NORD**  
with **Uskudar Eclectic**  
Doors 7PM / Show 7:30PM / All Ages / Seated / \$18 ADV / \$22 DOS

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## MUSIC

If you'd known just where I've been last night?/Would you still hold me/If I hung you out to dry at times?"

Night Moves toured with the album much of the summer. There were long, sweaty drives through the southern U.S., glittering autumn evenings in Paris, and makeshift showers in venue bathrooms.

And there was drama: Alfano's vintage bass and Hanson's cymbals were lost in the flux of a flight transfer on their way home from the European tour. They were told there was no record of the instruments and the band had little hope they would ever see them again. But miraculously, and with impeccable timing, the lost gear rematerialized just an hour before soundcheck for their first show of the tour in Asheville, North Carolina.

Back home, Pelant reflects on starting again on a new album from ground zero.

"I have a lot of ideas about songs and am just focusing on figuring out what kind of record I want to make right now. I don't really know what it's going to be like exactly, but I know that as long as you trust the process it will be OK," Pelant says. "I feel like there's still plenty of territory to explore with the band and with myself." 

## CRITICS' PICKS

### THE BAD PLUS

DAKOTA, WEDNESDAY 12.25-SATURDAY 12.28  
The Bad Plus' annual year-end hometown residency comes with new pianist Orrin Evans now comfortably in place and follows the new lineup's second album, *Active Infinity*. Evans (replacing Ethan Iverson), drummer Dave King, and bassist Reid Anderson seamlessly engage the trio's renegade jazz spirit. *AI* juggles melodies and hooks with wily, angular bop extrapolations, often juxtaposing glistening lyricism and fierce, turbulent rhythmic scrums, creating a profound tension that's exhilarating, heady and visceral. 7 & 9 p.m. \$40-\$45. 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-1010. —RICK MASON

### SOUL ASYLUM


FIRST AVENUE, FRIDAY 12.27  
The runaway train that carried Soul Asylum to widespread acclaim and a Grammy in the '90s may have slowed down, but Dave Pirner has kept the band on the rails. SA, here settling into its annual holiday gig, is on the cusp of a new album and tour set for early 2020. New single "Dead Letter" is a dark rock ballad fueled by Pirner's impassioned vocals. Also soon due from Minnesota Historical Society Press is Pirner's *Loud Fast Words*, featuring annotated lyrics. Porcupine, with Greg Norton, and Local H open. 18+. 7 p.m. \$30. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —RICK MASON

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Breznysy

**♈ ARIES** (March 21-April 19): Nazi Germany invaded and occupied Denmark during World War II. In 1943, Hitler ordered all Danish Jews to be arrested—a first step in his plan to send them to concentration camps. But the Danish resistance movement leapt into action and smuggled virtually all of them to safety via fishing boats bound for Sweden. As a result, 8,000+ Danish Jews survived the Holocaust. You may not have the opportunity to do anything quite as heroic in 2020, Aries. But I expect you will have chances to express a high order of practical idealism that could be among your noblest and most valiant efforts ever. Draw inspiration from the Danish resistance.

**♉ TAURUS** (April 20-May 20): When she was 31, Taurus writer Charlotte Brontë finished writing her novel *Jane Eyre*. She guessed it would have a better chance of getting published if its author was thought to be a man. So she adopted the masculine pen name of Currer Bell and sent the manuscript unsolicited to a London publisher. Less than eight weeks later, her new book was in print. It quickly became a commercial success. I propose that we make Brontë one of your role models for 2020, Taurus. May she inspire you to be audacious in expressing yourself and confident in seeking the help you need to reach your goals. May she embolden you, too, to use ingenious stratagems to support your righteous cause.

**♊ GEMINI** (May 21-June 20): The year 2020 can and should be a lyrically healing one for you. Here's what I mean: Beauty and grace will be curative. The "medicine" you need will come to you via poetic and mellifluous experiences. With this in mind, I encourage you to seek out encounters with the following remedies: 1. Truth Whimsies 2. Curiosity Breakthroughs 3. Delight Gambles 4. Sacred Amusements 4. Redemptive Synchronicities 5. Surprise Ripenings 6. Gleeful Discoveries 7. Epiphany Adventures 8. Enchantment Games 9. Elegance Eruptions 10. Intimacy Angels 11. Playful Salvation 12. Luminosity Spells

**♋ CANCER** (June 21-July 22): "There are years that ask questions and years that answer," wrote author Zora Neale Hurston. According to my astrological analysis, Cancerian, 2020 is likely to be one of those years that asks questions, while 2021 will be a time when you'll get rich and meaningful answers to the queries you'll pose in 2020. To ensure that this plan works out for your maximum benefit, it's essential that you formulate provocative questions in the coming months. At first, it's fine if you generate too many. As the year progresses, you can whittle them down to the most ultimate and important questions. Get started!

**♌ LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22): The Roman Emperor Vespasian (9-79 AD) supervised the restoration of the Temple of Peace, the Temple of Claudius, and the Theater of Marcellus. He also built a huge statue of Apollo and the amphitheater now known as the Colosseum, whose magnificent ruins are still a major tourist attraction. Vespasian also created a less majestic but quite practical wonder: Rome's first public urinals. In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you Leos to be stimulated by his example in 2020. Be your usual magnificent self as you generate both inspiring beauty and earthy, pragmatic improvements.

**♍ VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): When Virgo author Mary Shelley was 18 years old, she had a disconcerting dream-like vision about a mad chemist who created a weird human-like creature out of non-living matter. She set about to write a book based on her mirage. At age 20, she published *Frankenstein*, a novel that would ultimately wield a huge cultural influence and become a seminal work in the "science fiction" genre. I propose we make Shelley one of your role models for 2020. Why? Because I suspect that you, too, will have the power to transform a challenging event or influence into an important asset. You'll be able to generate or attract a new source of energy by responding creatively to experiences that initially provoke anxiety.

**♎ LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Libra-born mystic poet Rumi (1207-1273) wrote that he searched for holy sustenance and divine inspiration in temples, churches, and mosques—but couldn't find them there. The good news? Because of his disappointment, he was motivated to go on an inner quest—and ultimately found holy sustenance and divine inspiration in his own heart. I've got a strong feeling that you'll have similar experiences in 2020, Libra. Not on every occasion, but much of the time, you will discover the treasure you need and long for not in the outside world but rather in your own depths.

**♏ SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Among his many accomplishments, Scorpio rapper Drake is an inventive rhymist. In his song "Diplomatic Immunity," he rhymes "sacred temple" with "stencil." Brilliant! Other rhymes: "statistics" with "ballistics"; "Treaty of Versailles" with "no cease and desist in I"; and—my favorite—"Al Jazeera" (the Qatar-based news source) with "Shakira" (the Colombian singer). According to my analysis of the astrological omens in 2020, many of you Scorpius will have Drake-style skill at mixing and blending seemingly disparate elements. I bet you'll also be good at connecting influences that belong together but have never been able to combine before.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Sagittarian poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1928) embodied a trait that many astrology textbooks suggest is common to the Sagittarian tribe: wanderlust. He was born in Prague but traveled widely throughout Europe and Russia. If there were a Guinness World Records' category for "Time Spent as a Houseguest," Rilke might hold it. There was a four-year period when he lived at fifty different addresses. I'm going to be bold here and hypothesize that 2020 will NOT be one of those years when you would benefit from being like Rilke. In fact, I hope you'll seek out more stability and security than usual.

**♑ CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Fifteenth-century Italian metalworker Lorenzo Ghiberti worked for 28 years to turn the Doors of the Florence Baptistery into a massive work of art. He used bronze to create numerous scenes from the Bible. His fellow artist Michelangelo was so impressed that he said Ghiberti's doors could have served as "The Gates of Paradise." I offer Ghiberti as inspiration for your life in 2020, Capricorn. I think you'll be capable of beginning a masterwork that could take quite some time to complete and serve as your very own "gate to paradise"; in other words, an engaging project and delightful accomplishment that will make you feel your life is eminently meaningful and worthwhile.

**♒ AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You're wise to cultivate a degree of skepticism and even contrariness. Like all of us, your abilities to say NO to detrimental influences and to criticize bad things are key to your mental health. On the other hand, it's a smart idea to keep checking yourself for irrelevant, gratuitous skepticism and contrariness. You have a sacred duty to maintain just the amount you need, but no more—even as you foster a vigorous reservoir of receptivity, optimism, and generosity. And guess what? 2020 will be an excellent time to make this one of your cornerstone habits.

**♓ PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20): Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) finished writing *The Divine Comedy* in 1320. Today it's considered one of the supreme literary accomplishments in the Italian language and a classic of world literature. But no one ever read the entire work in the English language until 1802, when it was translated for the first time. Let's invoke this as a metaphor for your life in the coming months, Pisces. According to my visions, a resource or influence that has previously been inaccessible to you will finally arrive in a form you can understand and use. Some wisdom that has been untranslatable or unreadable will at last be available.

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com  
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CROSSWORD

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13
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60							61					62		
63							64					65		

TIME AND SPACE

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- As we speak
- Just out of eyesight
- Onion-filled Indian fitters
- Mouth in Latin
- Cooler brand name
- Mali's capital
- Six-Day War hero
- Reasons for impeachment
- Word on a cornerstone
- Proof-conclusion word
- Info on a bike tire: Abbr.
- Make a point in writing?
- Christmas \_\_\_\_
- Put on
- Cold one?
- Enemy
- One who plays with yarn ball
- Water-to-wine miracle locale
- \_\_\_\_ Ice Arena (University of Michigan hockey arena)
- 1979 #1 hit for Rod Stewart
- Gallic existence
- Meter maid?
- Its last build was El Capitan
- William Barr's grp.
- 31-Across imbibers
- Turn bad
- Solving crime, say
- NPR drive giveaway, often
- Private sleeping quarters
- Masked no more
- Bettor-known place
- College sophomore's picture card, maybe

- "You get the picture..."
- Semicircular bench
- Coastal birds
- Tiny drink
- Liverpool's river
- Lock changers?
- It might make a statement

Down

- One without roots
- Town where Stephen King lived when he went to college
- "I \_\_\_\_ paying attention" ("My bad")
- Salty approval
- Arab guerrillas
- Combat company
- Engagement gift
- "Killing Eve" airer
- "The Biggest Loser" host Bob
- Way off
- "Beat Shazam" host
- "Tina: The Tina Turner Musical" role
- Pad name
- Little black dress occasion, maybe
- Excited gift giver's phrase
- Ice planet in "The Empire Strikes Back"
- 500 sheets
- Likely to pry
- Asian winter observance
- Makes bread
- Soul-searching criminal?
- Bennies

- Beatles classic with the dummy lyrics "scrambled eggs"
- Ohio city where Orville Wright was born
- Debuts of unicorns, briefly
- Combustion residue
- Old name of Tokyo
- ClickHole article, e.g.
- 1999 Heisman Trophy winner
- Quad ladies
- Like some sad goodbyes
- Really hard puzzle
- Molly's "Pretty in Pink" role
- Absolutely lose it
- Bug- \_\_\_\_
- Like "blanket," or "house" in France: Abbr.
- Wood splitter
- Boxing \_\_\_\_ (December 26, and hint to this puzzle's theme)
- Sucker

Last Week's Answer

M	A	M	A	S		P	U	B		P	R	I	Z	E
A	V	I	L	A		E	N	E		C	O	N	E	D
G	O	L	F	L	E	A	D	E	R	B	O	A	R	D
O	I	L				B	R	I	N	E		T	W	O
G	R	I	S	W	O	L	D		A	S	S	E	S	
						H	A	N	S		A	C	H	
E	F	F	I	G	Y		G	A	T	E	F	O	O	L
G	R	I	P	E	F		F	E	H		L	A	T	E
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C	A	R	B	R	A			G	O	D	C	H	I	L
A	L	E	E		H	O	O	H	A		K	O	I	
F	I	V	E	G	O	L	D	E	N		R	I	N	G
E	V	E	N	T		G	E	M		E	B	O	O	K
S	E	L	E	S		A	L	E		D	O	W	N	S



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## SAVAGE LOVE

# Open Ended

My girlfriend is cool with an open relationship—but threatened by my bisexuality. Why?

**I**'m a twentysomething bi man in a loving relationship of three years with a straight woman. Last year, we opened up our relationship. At the beginning, we set some ground rules. One of her rules was that I could get together only with women, no men. It bothered me at the time, but it was the only way she would be okay opening up, so I didn't press her on it. Fast-forward to a couple days ago, when I brought it up again. She eventually admitted she's afraid I will leave her for a man, and that's why the idea of me being with other men makes her uncomfortable. She knows these are stereotypes, but she says she can't get over it. I ended that night angry and hurt. Now I don't know what to do. To be honest, if we weren't in an open relationship, I wouldn't be bothered by the fact that I can't be sexual with men. But now that I know she is not okay with me doing so because of these bi stereotypes, it drives me nuts. I'm not going to end our relationship over this, but how can I get her to understand my bisexuality is not a threat?



Dan Savage

"and to tell her and show her how much he loves her. He might also ask if there's a way she'd feel more comfortable allowing him to be sexual with a man. Maybe they have a threesome. Maybe she prefers that it be someone she knows, or someone she doesn't know. There's a lot to discuss."

But eventually, for your own sanity, you're going to have to insist that your girlfriend get over her biphobia. She can't just throw up her hands and say, "I can't help it!"

"Perhaps I'm giving BBB's girlfriend too much credit, but it sounds to me like she'll come around in time," said Zane. "And while BBB is angry—and validly so—the anger shouldn't be placed on his girlfriend. It should

be placed on a society that has ingrained in her the belief that bisexuality isn't valid and that bi men will always leave their wives/girlfriends for another man if given the opportunity."

And if she never comes around, BBB, then you can show her how silly and irrational her fears were by leaving her for another woman.

BYE-BYE BISEXUALITY?

"BBB obviously isn't going to leave his girlfriend for the first man he sleeps with," said Zachary Zane, a "bisexual influencer" and a sex writer for Men's Health. "All bisexual men are not secretly gay. But this is a lie—a vicious stereotype—that BBB's girlfriend has heard countless times. So even though she knows this logically, she still can't shake that concern. Fear often isn't rational and it can override logic. She's simply insecure."

And while accommodating a partner's irrational insecurity is sometimes the price we have to pay to make an open relationship work, accommodating your partner's insecurity—one so clearly rooted in biphobia—isn't going to be sustainable over time. You're already angry and hurt, BBB, and you're going to get more upset with every dick you have to pass up. So what do you do?

"The key to helping BBB's girlfriend understand that his bisexuality isn't a threat is for him to reassure her often that he's not going to leave her for a man," said Zane,

*I'm a bisexual man married to the most beautiful trans woman. I can't keep my hands off her. But why can't I fuck her anally like we both want? I can't seem to push past the gates, which sends a signal to my brain that I'm doing something wrong, which makes me Mr. Softee. Every other thing we do in bed is smooth as silk. Help!*

LIMP ISN'T MY PREFERENCE

**I'd have to see** video to guess at what might be wrong—not an ask, LIMP, don't send video—but it never hurts to use more lube, engage in more anal foreplay, and sometimes do butt stuff without even attempting anal intercourse. And when you do go for it, maybe instead of you trying to fuck her/push past the gates, LIMP, you could lie still and let her take charge. In other words: Don't fuck her with your dick, let her fuck herself with your dick.

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Follow Dan on Twitter: @fakedansavage  
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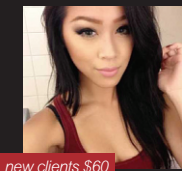


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